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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 01849 220920 Z

15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
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FM USINT CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3263
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T CAIRO 1849

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR JO EG
SUBJECT: JORDAN' S FEARS ABOUT EGYPT

REF: STATE 119011

1. LAST WEEK WE WOULD HAVE AGREED WITH DEPARTMENT' S ASSESSMENT AS EXPRESSED REFTEL. NOW, HOWEVER, WE ARE IMPRESSED BY FACT THAT ZAYYAT IS CONTINUING TO PURSUE THEME OF PALESTINIAN STATE. MOST RECENT EXAMPLE IS DANISH TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON JUNE 19. ACCORDING TO REPORTS OF THIS INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN CAIRO PRESS, ZAYYAT POINTEDLY IGNORED ANY GOJ CLAIMS TO WEST BANK WHEN DISCUSSING FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN STATE. THIS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE DECIDED CONDUCT PRESSURE CAMPAIGN ON JORDAN FOR PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING KING' S POLICIES TOWARDS EASTERN FRONT AND PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS.

2. ZAYYAT' S BLUNT TACTICS COULD ALSO HAVE OTHER MOTIVATIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT EGYPT IS CONCERNED BY
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 01849 220920 Z

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THE DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITIES OF MORE EXTREMIST PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO DISRUPT PROGRESS TOWARDS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. STRONG REACTION OF WESTERN COUNTRIES TO PALESTINIAN TERRORIST TACTICS HAS PROBABLY CONVINCED EGYPTIANS THAT BSO AND THEIR ILK DO IN FACT POSSESS THIS CAPABILITY. EGYPTIANS MAY FEEL THAT EXTREMIST ELEMENTS AMONG PALESTINIANS CAN BE UNDERCUT IF MORE MODERATE PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS ARE GIVEN IN-CREASED STATURE. WHILE PALESTINIANS ARE STILL HIGHLY DIVIDED AND LACKING IN BROADLY BASED LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS, EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE HOPES THAT PLO WITH PROPER EGYPTIAN NOURISHING COULD BECOME A MORE MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE GROUP REPRESENTING BROADER SECTOR OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

3. WE BELIEVE SADAT ALSO POSSESSES TRADITIONAL EGYPTIAN AMBITION OF PLAYING LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ARAB WORLD. EGYPT' S ESPOUSING OF PLO COULD INCREASE EGYPT' S PRESTIGE WITH PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS WITH BROAD SECTOR OF ARAB PUBLIC OPINION. SINCE JORDANIANS NOW OBVIOUSLY UNWILLING TO TAKE ORDERS FROM EGYPT, GOE MAY FEEL IT HAS LITTLE TO LOSE BY ANTAGONIZING HUSSEIN AND, WITHIN ARAB CONTEXT, MAY HAVE MUCH TO GAIN BY INCREASING ITS SUPPORT FOR PLO.

4. WHILE KING HUSSEIN WILL CERTAINLY BE UNHAPPY WITH THIS EVOLUTION IN EGYPTIAN POLICY, WE BELIEVE THAT EGYPT HAS ONLY A LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR HARMING THE JORDANIAN REGIME, AT LEAST ON ITS EAST BANK HOME GROUND. THE JORDANIAN REGIME THAT SURVIVED THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 1970 SHOULD NOT BE SERIOUSLY THREATENED BY THIS NEW THRUST IN EGYPTIAN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIANS. EGYPTIANS DO, HOWEVER, HAVE SOME DIPLOMATIC CAPABILITY FOR IN-FLUENCING ULTIMATE DISPOSTION OF WEST BANK. THEY NOW SEEM PREPARED TO USE THIS CAPABILITY TO WORK AGAINST HUSSEIN' S WEST BANK ASPIRATIONS.
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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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EO Systematic Review
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